III. TIPPECANOE CAMPAIGN

> . . . he [the president] is so far off he will not be injured by the war; he may sit in his town and drink his wine, while you and I have to fight it out.[1]
>
> —Tecumseh, *remark to Governor Harrison*

Setting the Stage

Tecumseh's adamant refusal to accept the provisions of the Treaty of Fort Wayne foreshadowed the inevitability of another Indian war. Harrison was apprehensive that Tecumseh would prevent a survey of the lands ceded by the treaty. Settlers, likewise, were afraid that Indian raids would continue or that the Indians would attack Vincennes. Tecumseh and the tribes allied with him, for their part, were alarmed that the Seventeen Fires[2]—the Americans arrayed against the Indians—would consume all of the Indian lands. Each side feared the threat posed by the other, and these fears made the campaign and resulting battle inevitable. The only question remaining was when the battle would happen.

Successive administrations in Washington urged Harrison to continue his efforts to extinguish Indian title to lands in the Indiana Territory. In response, Harrison, throughout his years as governor, proved extremely adept at gaining land cessions to support the growing expansion of settlements along the frontier. Indeed, between 1802 and 1809, he extinguished Indian title to over one hundred million acres.[3]

Meanwhile, over the same decade, Tecumseh organized and established a confederacy or amalgamation of tribes. Starting in 1801 and continuing until his death in 1813, Tecumseh supported a grand but simple plan for a confederacy that would allow the Indians to maintain their independence and regain lands lost to American encroachment. The plan proposed that the Indians on both sides of the Mississippi join forces when they received a "great sign." Thereupon, they would regain the lands lost to white encroachment—peaceably, if possible, but by force, if necessary. The goal of the confederacy was to "take over the place of the whites which had been usurped from them."[4]

Tecumseh was successful in establishing his confederacy, and by 1805, he had more tribes pledged to the coalition than had any previous Indian confederacy.[5] As more tribes pledged their support, his headquarters at Prophet's Town continued to increase in size. In support of the confederacy, small groups of warriors or individual braves moved with

their families to the village at Tippecanoe. In the summer of 1810, the size of the village grew from 1,000 warriors and their families to 3,000 warriors, alone, all of whom camped within thirty miles of Prophet's Town.[6]

Politically, Tecumseh focused his efforts on recruiting support from the various Indian leaders. This support would provide him with manpower at his Tippecanoe headquarters and with additional forces if hostilities erupted. For material support, Tecumseh relied on the British. Although he refused until the War of 1812 to establish a formal political-military alliance with the British, he, nonetheless, accepted supplies from them on a routine basis. By 1810, Tecumseh's warriors were so well supplied by the British forces who provided them with guns, ammunition, and other supplies at no cost that they refused to buy anything from American traders.[7]

The Almost War

As American possessions continued to expand, concern grew on both sides about the threat of war. Consequently, Harrison and Tecumseh met several times between 1810 and 1811 in attempts to prevent hostilities and to discuss the impact of the most recent land cessions. The meetings and discussions had little long-term effect, however, because each side focused on short-term remedies that would protect their particular political or military interests.

Tecumseh was clearly focused on protecting Indian lands as well as renegotiating the rights to territory already ceded to the United States. He used the meetings to buy time for the confederacy until it was strong enough to act politically or militarily to regain Indian territory. Harrison, on the other hand, was determined to protect the territory gained during previous negotiations as well as ensure his ability to treat with individual tribes for new land cessions.[8] President Madison's administration encouraged these efforts. Secretary of War William Eustis wrote to Harrison, directing him to extinguish the Indian title to lands east of the Wabash River. Harrison concluded several treaties, including the Treaty of Fort Wayne, shortly after receiving this guidance. The agreements were ratified after the new year, and the lands gained as a result of the treaty were quickly offered for public sale.[9]

The Treaty of Fort Wayne was a major catalyst for the Tippecanoe campaign. In the spring of 1809, Harrison met with several representatives of the area tribes at Greenville, Ohio, and gained rights to more than three million acres of land in Indiana. This agreement became final on 30

September 1809 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Because Tecumseh was away recruiting tribes for the confederacy during the negotiations, the treaty was concluded without his or his band's input. Subsequent meetings between Tecumseh and Harrison at Vincennes were a result of Harrison's desire to take possession of the new purchase and Tecumseh's desire to retain the area for Indian use.

Each side tried to gain the support of the undecided Indian tribes. For this purpose, Tecumseh continued traversing the area. Harrison, for his part, either met with the various Indian chiefs or sent letters by messenger to them. The tone of Harrison's missives was to limit the influence of Tecumseh among the leaders of the different tribes in the territory. The nature of Harrison's messages depended upon the disposition of the recipients toward the United States. Tribes that maintained an attitude of friendship toward the United States were congratulated for not joining Tecumseh. Tribes that considered joining Tecumseh's coalition received letters threatening their destruction. Many of Harrison's letters had the expected effect, such as the congratulatory one sent to Chief Black Hoof, who responded that he would maintain friendship with the United States. The threatening letter to the Wyandots, in contrast, had the opposite effect. The Wyandots considered the letter a declaration of war and joined Tecumseh.[10]

When Tecumseh made recruiting trips, his brother remained in charge at Prophet's Town. The Prophet, however, had neither the political acumen nor discipline of his older brother and often encouraged the warriors at Tippecanoe to take provocative actions that only drew the United States and the confederacy closer to war. Furthermore, during one of Tecumseh's absences, in July 1810, the Prophet urged the warriors at Prophet's Town to destroy a white settlement and proposed an attack on Vincennes. This caused a rift among the tribes supporting the confederation; many Indians left Prophet's Town, and some tribes refused to continue support of the confederacy.

Nonetheless, the Prophet convinced approximately 500 warriors to strike out for Vincennes. The warriors canoed down the Wabash and established a camp about fifty miles from the town. Harrison, through his intelligence network, however, was informed of the proposed attack. To protect the capital, he raised three companies of volunteer militia and stationed them a few miles above Vincennes at Fort Knox. Tecumseh, meanwhile, warned of his brother's plans, quickly returned to the

headquarters at Tippecanoe, put a stop to the intended attack, and delayed the inevitable confrontation.[11]

Because of the increasing tensions between the settlers and the Indians on the frontier, Harrison and Tecumseh subsequently met twice at Vincennes. Harrison initiated the first meeting by writing to Tecumseh. A messenger read the letter to Tecumseh and his brother at Prophet's Town in July 1810. Harrison's emissary told the brothers that

> Although I must say that you are an enemy to the Seventeen Fires, and that you have used the greatest exertions to lead them [the Indians] astray. In this you have been in some measure successful; as I am told they are ready to raise the tomahawk against their father. . . . Don't deceive yourselves; do not believe that all nations of Indians united are able to resist the force of the Seventeen Fires. . . . what can a few brave warriors do against the innumerable warriors of the Seventeen Fires? Our blue-coats are more numerous than you can count. . . . Do not think that the red-coats can protect you; they are not able to protect themselves. . . . What reason have you to complain of the Seventeen Fires? Have they taken anything from you? Have they ever violated the treaties made with the red men? You say they have purchased lands from those who had no right to sell them. Show that this is true and the land will be restored. Show us the rightful owners. I have full power to arrange this business; but if you would rather carry your complaints before your great father, the President, you shall be indulged. I will immediately take means to send you. . . .[12]

Tecumseh declined the trip to Washington, preferring instead to meet with Harrison at Vincennes. During the August 1810 meeting, Tecumseh told Harrison that the Treaty of Fort Wayne was invalid. Furthermore, Tecumseh threatened that if the land was not restored, Harrison would see "how it will be settled."[13] Harrison countered that the Shawnees did not have the right to represent the Indians at treaty negotiations because they had been driven from their traditional homelands in Florida and Georgia by the Creek Indians. Moreover, since the Miami occupied the land when the Shawnee were in the south, the Miami were the appropriate tribe to deal with during treaty negotiations. Finally, Harrison stated that all Indians were not one people and that the Shawnee did not have the right to come from a "distant country" and tell the Miami how to dispose of their lands.[14]

The strongly stated positions almost resulted in a fight between the Indians present and Harrison's contingent. The meeting reconvened the next day with Harrison and Tecumseh outwardly displaying more restraint.

Harrison asked Tecumseh if he planned to prevent a survey of the land on the Wabash. Tecumseh replied that he was determined to maintain the pre-1809 boundary. Harrison promised to pass Tecumseh's concerns to the president, but he did not think it would make a difference. The governor also emphasized that the American title to the land "will be protected and supported by the sword."[15] Tecumseh told Harrison that he wanted to support the United States, but if the President did not agree to his terms, then the Indians would support the British.[16]

Since the establishment of Prophet's Town, Harrison routinely received reports about activities at the village, such as its size and the intent of the Indian leaders there. The spies, traders, and government Indian agents that made up a large part of Harrison's frontier intelligence system continually submitted reports that gave the governor reason for grave concern about the potential threat from the Indians at Prophet's Town. As Harrison's suspicions grew, he began to believe that Tecumseh and his brother were preparing for war with the United States.

In the spring of 1811, another incident occurred that raised Harrison's concern. Part of the annuity that the United States paid to area Indian tribes was salt, an important commodity in short supply on the frontier. As a boat moved up the Wabash to distribute the salt annuity, the Prophet seized the entire shipment for his use at Tippecanoe. Upon their return to Vincennes, the boatmen reported seeing hundreds of Indian canoes lined up along the banks of the Wabash. Harrison now realized that Tecumseh's warriors could move faster down the Wabash River with a large force to attack Vincennes than they could on an overland route (which had been his earlier expectation). Given this approach, an attack could happen with little warning.[17]

Soon, the situation deteriorated, with more violent incidents between the Indians and the settlers, causing Harrison to recognize the enduring threat of an Indian attack on Vincennes. As a result of the increased disorder and his continued concern for the protection of Vincennes, Harrison wrote to Secretary Eustis requesting reinforcements, together with the authority to take the offensive if war seemed imminent. Responding to Harrison's requests, Eustis sent the 4th U.S. to Vincennes.[18]

The continued unrest along the frontier brought Harrison and Tecumseh together for another meeting at Vincennes on 27 July 1811. In addition to discussions over the land ceded by the 1809 treaty, Harrison requested that Tecumseh turn over to him two Potawatomi warriors who were accused of

murdering settlers. Tecumseh refused, because the whites, he explained, had not been murdered. The settlers were executed because they had killed two Wea Indians without provocation.[19]

The two days of meetings concluded with Tecumseh telling Harrison that he planned to leave for the south to visit tribes and bring back more Indians for the confederacy. Tecumseh asked Harrison to delay any action in the disputed area until his return in the spring. Tecumseh explained that the land on the Wabash was the best hunting ground and that, since the size of the Tippecanoe village would grow with new arrivals, the Indians needed the land to feed their increasing population. Tecumseh closed by stating that, upon his return, he would go to Washington and talk to the president.[20]

Tecumseh left for the south to meet with the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek Indians to gain their support for his confederacy's war with the United States. Before departing, he directed his brother to go back to Prophet's Town and to avoid any premature battle with Harrison's forces. Although Tecumseh told Harrison that he would return in the spring, Harrison's spies reported that a major event sponsored by Tecumseh (they were not sure what) was to occur in the late fall. Harrison knew that if he were to take action, it would have to be before Tecumseh's return.[21]

The Campaign

The campaign started in the summer of 1811 as both sides were making final preparations to protect their interests. Harrison made his intentions clear to the administration through letters to the secretary of war. He was convinced that the key to breaking up the Indian union and extinguishing Indian title to land was to continue to deal with individual chiefs or small tribes, rather than with a unified, politically powerful Indian body. Harrison also felt that Tecumseh's efforts to increase the number of tribes pledged to the confederacy posed a serious threat to U.S. interests. The governor expressed his concerns in a letter to Secretary of War Eustis: "A step of this sort would be of infinite prejudice to the United States. . . . It would shut the door against further extinguishing of Indian title upon the valuable tract of country south of the Wabash. . . . The establishment of tranquillity between the neighboring tribes will always be a sure indication of war against us."[22]

In the same letter, Harrison proposed attacking the Indians during Tecumseh's trip south, emphasizing that Tecumseh's absence ". . . affords a most favorable opportunity for breaking up his Confederacy. . . . He is now upon the last round to put a finishing stroke to his work. I hope, however, before his return, that that part of the fabrick [sic] which he considered

complete [the coalition of tribes] will be demolished and even its foundation rooted up."[23]

Secretary Eustis quickly responded in a 17 July 1811 letter, telling Harrison that "If the Prophet should commence, or seriously threaten hostilities, he ought to be attacked; provided the force under your command is sufficient to ensure success."[24] Three days later, the secretary of war dispatched another letter to Harrison that provided additional guidance and modified the earlier hard-line approach to the problem:

> Since my letter of the 17th instant, I have been particularly instructed by the President [Madison] to communicate to your excellency his earnest desire that peace may, if possible, be preserved with the Indians, and that to this end every proper means may be adopted. By this it is not intended . . . that the banditti under the Prophet should not be attacked and vanquished, providing such a measure should be rendered absolutely necessary.[25]

Harrison obviously felt that the time was right and that there were compelling reasons to take strong action against the Indians. He was concerned about the continued material support that the British gave the Indians and the threat such a British-Indian military alliance posed to American security on the frontier. Although Harrison was unsure of how much British support the Indians were getting, he believed a British-supported Indian war was likely. Therefore, he felt that he should crush the Indians before the British openly aided them.[26]

Harrison also believed that the time was right to attack because of the absence of the coalition's leader, Tecumseh. Whenever Tecumseh was gone, the Prophet was in charge, and Harrison believed that the Prophet did not have the same leadership or tactical skills as his brother. In short, it would be easier to destroy or disrupt the coalition while Tecumseh was away. Another significant consideration for Harrison was the constant threat of an Indian attack on Vincennes. He felt that a major military operation would deter future Indian attacks or break up the confederacy.

An 18 September 1811 letter from the secretary of war outlined the secretary's views on the situation and gave Harrison further encouragement to complete preparations for an expedition against the Prophet. Eustis told Harrison:

> The course to be pursued with the Prophet and his assemblage, must depend, in a great measure, if not wholly, on his conduct, and on the circumstances which occur as you approach him.

> You will approach and order him to disperse, which he may be permitted to do, on condition of satisfactory assurances that in future he shall not assemble or attempt to assemble any number of Indians, armed or hostile in attitude. If he neglects or refuses to disperse he will be attacked and compelled to it by the force under your command. He will probably in that case be taken prisoner. His adherents should be informed that in case they shall hereafter form any combination of a hostile nature, and oblige the government to send an armed force against them, they will be driven beyond the great waters, and never again permitted to live within the Jurisdictional limits of the United States.
>
> You will Judge the expediency of taking the chief or any of the associates as hostages. The objection to this measure appears to be, that it acknowledges the principal as an enemy entitled to respect, and implies the inconvenience of entering into & performing stipulations with a man of bad faith.
>
> A post may be established on the new purchase on the [W]abash, if in your judgment it is required for the Security of the purchase or the Territories.[27]

After Harrison received the secretary of war's approval to take action against the Indians, he began increasing the size of his force for a possible expedition. The regulars, commanded by Colonel John Parker Boyd, were already under his command, so Harrison activated militia units and recruited volunteers to augment the regulars. The pool of potential recruits extended outside of Indiana's territorial boundary. For example, Kentucky actively supported the proposed campaign and provided militia to augment Harrison's force.[28] Many settlers in Kentucky considered imminent hostilities in Indiana a threat to their own security. On 31 August 1811, a Lexington, Kentucky, newspaper endorsed military action by writing: "If Harrison is defeated for want of your help you will have the enemy to fight on your own shore of the Ohio ere long."[29]

No large body of experienced manpower existed to cull for Indian fighters. Militia volunteers were generally hastily armed civilians with little military experience who had never seen, heard, or fought a hostile Indian warrior.[30] Potential combatants, moreover, lacked combat experience because there had not been a major military operation in the region since the 1794 Fallen Timbers campaign. Harrison relied on training and adequate numbers to overcome the lack of experience in his army. By mid-October, he was able to assemble a force of about 1,100 men to conduct the campaign.[31]

One problem that Harrison faced was how to design a legitimate reason for military action against the Indians. Although Eustis endorsed Harrison's desire to occupy the new purchase and, if required, to march on the Prophet, only Congress had the authority to declare war. Harrison, as governor, could occupy the new purchases, but the Tippecanoe village remained beyond the boundary of the new land cessions. Thus, Harrison had limited authority to march against the Prophet, since a move beyond the 1809 boundary still constituted an invasion of Indian territory without the consent of Congress.[32]

Several circumstances combined to give Harrison a pretense to conduct a show of force. Tecumseh told Harrison in one of their meetings that he would contest efforts to survey the land cessions.[33] There was also the issue of the two Potawatomi Indians who had killed the whites earlier in the summer. Finally, a few Indians, encouraged by the Prophet, had stolen several horses from settlers during a raid in September 1811. While the incident was not enough pretext for offensive action, it provided a valid excuse for a significant show of force.[34]

On 26 September 1811, Harrison's force left the territorial capital and headed for the new purchase. The men moved about sixty-five miles north of Vincennes (present-day Terre Haute, Indiana), where they stopped for almost a month to build a fort, train, and gather supplies. Establishment of the fort, named Fort Harrison, accomplished two important objectives. First, it provided a formal means to occupy the new cessions. Second, the fort offered a secure location for the army to stockpile supplies and protect its line of communication as it moved farther into hostile territory.

Several important events transpired while Harrison's force was establishing the new post. For one, Harrison sent a delegation to the Delaware Indians to obtain a few chiefs to use as negotiators with the Indians at Prophet's Town. The chiefs, who agreed to help Harrison, however, were delayed while en route to join the army at Fort Harrison by a war party from Prophet's Town that intercepted them. The war party forced the Delaware chiefs to accompany them to the Tippecanoe village. The Delawares, nonetheless, were eventually released and resumed their journey to join Harrison. The delegates, furious because of their detention, arrived at Fort Harrison on 27 October 1811 and provided the governor with intelligence about the Prophet's intentions and about activities at the village. The chiefs reported that the warriors at Tippecanoe performed war dances nightly and that the Prophet promised to burn alive the first prisoners captured.[35]

An Indian party from Prophet's Town subsequently provided Harrison with his excuse to enter the Tippecanoe area and take offensive action. On the night of 10 October 1811, one of the hostile Indians shot and severely wounded a sentinel at the fort. Harrison then increased the size of his force with additional companies from Vincennes and prepared to march. Upon arrival of reinforcements, his strength grew from roughly 900 men to about 1,100 regulars and militia.[36]

Initially, Harrison thought that, without Tecumseh's leadership, the advance of an army would demoralize the Indians enough to make them desert or agree to the governor's demands. After the attack on the sentry, however, he realized that the Indians at Prophet's Town would fight. Thus, rather than move hastily against the Prophet in early October, he waited for his supplies to catch up with him.[37] Shortly after the attack on his sentry, Harrison wrote Eustis and told him that "Nothing now remains but to chastise him [the Prophet] and he shall certainly get it."[38] The inevitable clash between the Seventeen Fires and the amalgamation of tribes was only a few days march away.

After receiving and consolidating his supplies, Harrison wasted no time. Leaving Lieutenant Colonel James Miller (4th U.S.) with a small detachment to garrison the fort, he moved the army north toward Tippecanoe. One day after starting the march, Harrison sent a delegation of Delaware and Miami Indians to Prophet's Town with a message for Tenskwatawa. The message demanded that the Potawatomies, Winnebagoes, and Kickapoos return to their tribes, that the stolen horses be returned, and that the murderers of the whites surrender. The delegation departed and was never heard from again.[39]

There were two main routes to Prophet's Town from Fort Harrison. The shorter route, on the east side of the Wabash, consisted of densely wooded terrain favorable for ambush. The other route was on the opposite side of the river and, although longer, passed through more open terrain, enhancing the security of the U.S. force. Harrison ordered a route cleared along the eastern side of the Wabash and began moving the army along the trail, creating the impression that the army was taking the less secure route. On 31 October 1811, however, the army crossed the river to the more secure route. The deception was successful, and the force encountered no Indian scouts during its transit through most of the new purchase.[40] Shortly after crossing the Wabash, the army reached the extreme boundary of the land cession at the Vermillion River.

At the river, Harrison halted and built a blockhouse to cache supplies and boats. The army was then approximately sixty miles from Prophet's Town; crossing the Vermillion into Indian territory would be an act of war.[41] On 3 November 1811, Harrison left a small detachment at the blockhouse and crossed the river into Indian Territory, arriving in the vicinity of Prophet's Town on 6 November 1811.

The army continued its march to within a few hundred yards of Prophet's Town before setting up camp a short distance away from the village, near Burnett Creek. During the early morning hours of 7 November 1811, several hundred Indians attacked the army's encampment, but after a fierce fight of about two hours, the Indians retreated. The next day, the American's burned Prophet's Town and began the long march back to Vincennes.

Following the battle, a small party of Indians established a camp on Wildcat Creek, while the rest of the Prophet's Town population dispersed, spreading the news of the defeat. The immediate impact of the Indian loss was that tribes and individuals deserted the coalition. Without British assistance, the remaining confederacy was so degraded that it posed no serious threat to American expansion. After the Battle of Tippecanoe, Tecumseh was never able to organize a solely Indian confederacy with the same degree of success. [42]

Analysis

American *strategic* goals during the Tippecanoe campaign remained consistent with Jefferson's unofficial instructions requiring Harrison to exhaust Indian title to lands peacefully or force the Indians across the Mississippi. The strategic goal that Tecumseh expressed for the confederacy was also straightforward. The confederacy wanted to develop a political and military amalgamation of tribes strong enough to resist American advances, either through negotiations or by force of arms. To support their strategic goals, the Indians developed a de facto alliance with the British for material support. The Indians also used intertribal agreements to support anticipated manpower requirements and to ensure the political unity of the confederacy.

Operational levels of war are characterized by the American expeditions to defeat the Indians. The earlier expeditions led by Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne are examples of major operations that were conducted without clearly defined strategic goals; these expeditions were merely punitive in nature. Harrison's operation into the land purchase, in contrast,

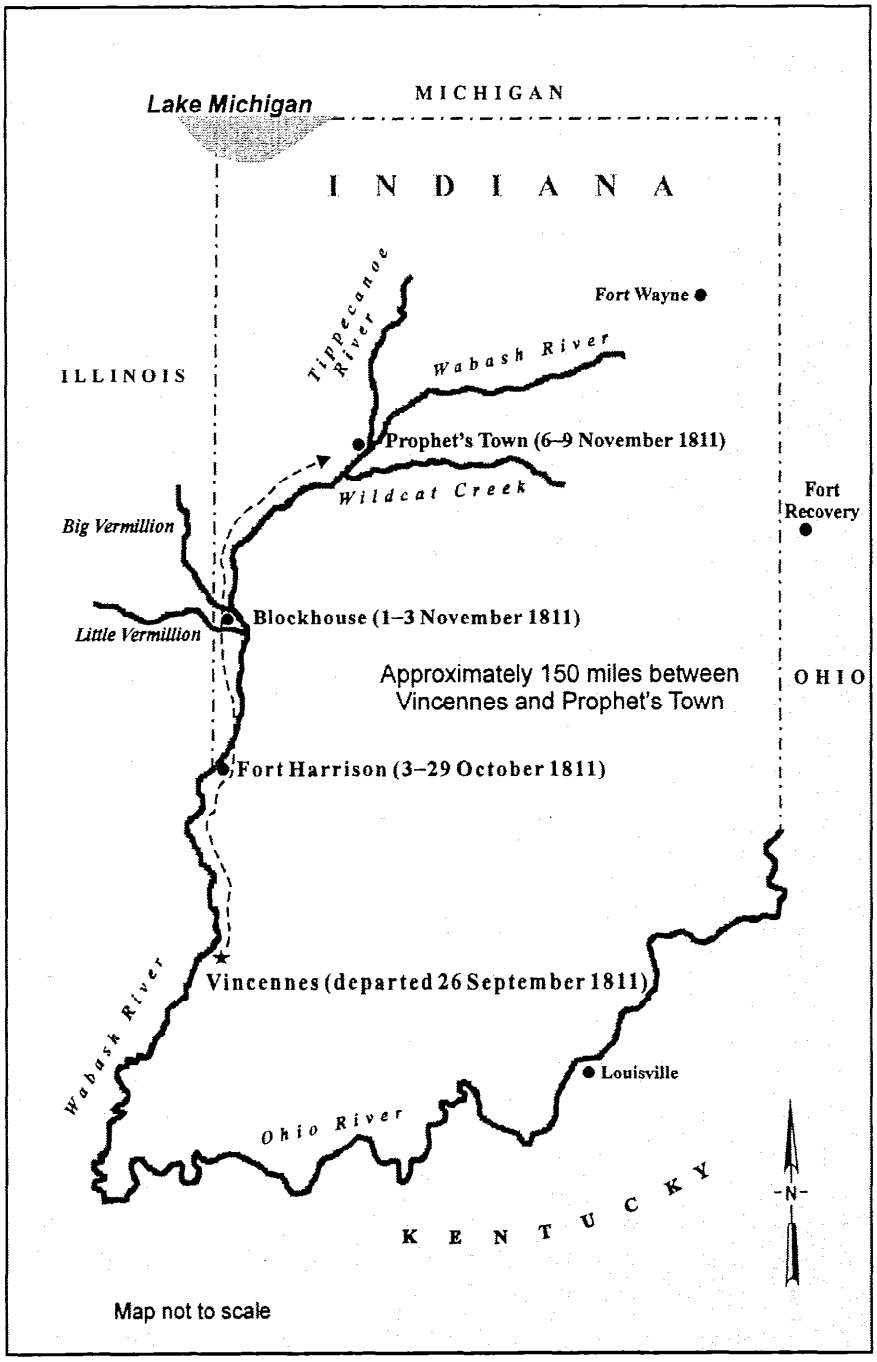
was a major operation designed and conducted to achieve a strategic goal: to reduce the major Indian threat in the area. Reduction of this threat allowed the United States to continue its policy of extinguishing Indian title to land in the territory as rapidly as possible.

The operational objective of the Tippecanoe campaign (see map 2) was to make the confederacy ineffective by destroying its base of operation, which would result in a loss of support for the coalition from other tribes. The objective could be accomplished by a show of force or combat. An additional operational objective of the Tippecanoe campaign was to demonstrate U.S. resolve to enforce treaty obligations. The campaign would terminate when the Indians at Prophet's Town had dispersed and the village was destroyed—regardless of whether the Indian displacement was peaceful or by force.

The confederacy's operational objectives are not as clearly defined. Operationally, the Indians wanted to demonstrate to the United States that previous treaty negotiations were invalid. Tecumseh's paradigm held that the Treaty of Fort Wayne was invalid unless it was endorsed by a single, unified Indian political entity. To achieve his operational goal, Tecumseh planned to contest the United States' occupation of the lands ceded by the 1809 treaty.

Tecumseh also wanted to improve the military strength and capability of the confederacy. This could be demonstrated by increasing the number of Indians at Prophet's Town and the number of tribes that could be assembled on demand to conduct military operations. The size of the available Indian force was important to establish the military and political credibility of the confederacy with the United States. A major Indian success in the field against U.S. military forces would serve the same purpose and increase the credibility of the confederacy among undecided Indian tribes. It was important for Tecumseh to win any engagement against an American army. The operational specifics of Tecumseh's grand plan were not clearly defined. The general operational objective was that the tribes would assemble on command (a great sign) and regain their lands through negotiation or force.

Tactically, the United States planned to occupy the land cessions with troops and build forts to show permanency. Harrison also wanted to conduct a show of force in the Tippecanoe area large enough to force the Indians to disperse. Part of Harrison's plan required destroying Prophet's Town, which, he felt, would cause the confederacy to lose the support of



Map 2. Route, Tippecanoe campaign

tribes already pledged to it and cause undecided tribes to decline membership in the confederacy.

The Indians' tactical plans are difficult to discern, and one must rely on previously established models to predict Indian tactics. Tecumseh never clearly stated how he proposed to stop the United States from occupying the land purchases. One option was that the warriors could have canoed down the Wabash and attacked Vincennes. While this was a possibility that caused a great deal of concern, there was not a recent precedent for that type of large-scale attack. The Indians could have continued to conduct raids and attacks on outlying settlements, but they probably would have had little chance for operational success with these types of tactics.

An analysis of the Indian engagements with Generals Harmar and Wayne indicates that the Indians might have tried to conduct a series of ambushes on an American force in close terrain (see table 1).[43] Previous major defeats of large American forces had garnered some longer-term gains for the Indians: because of their military successes against Harmar and St. Clair, the Indians were able to prevent encroachment of their lands for almost five years. In both of these operations, the Indians picked the time and location of the engagements, unlike their fight with General Wayne and the American Legion at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Tecumseh would have been familiar with the successes and failures of these campaigns. Had Tecumseh been present during the Tippecanoe campaign, he might have applied the Indian lessons learned during combat with Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne.[44]

To meet their own strategic goals, which were to protect Canada and maintain a lucrative fur trade in North America, the British supported the Indians at the operational and tactical levels of war. To achieve their strategic goals, the British pursued an operational design that promoted the establishment of an Indian buffer state and British control of crucial trade routes along the Great Lakes. At the tactical level, the British provided substantial covert aid to the northwestern Indian tribes.[45]

The operational design of the campaign also provides some interesting lessons. The components of operational design are centers of gravity, lines of operation, decisive points, and culmination points. Centers of gravity are that characteristic, capability, or location from which a force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight. Lines of operation are how a force is connected to its base of operation. Decisive points are the keys to centers of gravity. Decisive points influence the outcome of an

	UNITED STATES	INDIAN CONFEDERACY	GREAT BRITAIN
STRATEGIC	• Gain Indian land. • Assimilate Indians peacefully or drive them across the Mississippi.	• Retain land. • Compel U.S. to recognize confederacy as the agency to negotiate with.	• Protect Canada. • Maintain North American fur trade.
OPERATIONAL	• Make confederacy ineffective. • Show U.S. resolve regarding treaty enforcement.	• Show that 1809 treaty was invalid. • Improve military capability and size of the confederacy.	• Influence creation of Indian buffer state. • Control the Great Lakes lines of communication.
TACTICAL	• Occupy 1809 land cessions. • Force confederacy to disperse. • Destroy Prophet's Town.	• Prevent occupation of 1809 land cessions. • Attack Vincennes, raid settlements, or attack forts. • Ambush military forces.	• Support Indian combat operations with advisers, equipment, and supplies. • Maintain posts along the Great Lakes.

Table 1. Campaign analysis, levels of war

action by providing the commander with a marked advantage over the enemy by helping him to gain or maintain the initiative. Decisive points can be geographical in nature or things that sustain command. The final element of operational design is the culmination point. The culmination point has offensive and defensive applications. Offensively, the culminating point is reached at the time and place where the attacker's combat power does not exceed the defenders. During the defense, a defender culminates when he can no longer assume the counteroffensive or defend successfully.[46]

The centers of gravity for the United States and the confederacy were similar. In each case, the center of gravity was the ability to sustain the political efforts to accomplish the strategic goals. The United States' center of gravity was presidential policy about continued territorial expansion. The confederacy's center of gravity was the political unity of the confederacy and the continued support by various tribes for Tecumseh's plan.

Harrison's lines of operation were clearly exterior and extended about 150 miles from Vincennes through the new land purchases to Prophet's

Town. This line of operation was supported by land lines of communication (LOCs) from Vincennes, through Fort Harrison, and Boyd's Blockhouse. The Wabash River provided an excellent water LOC that supported resupply between the capital and the outposts. The Indian lines of operation were interior because the confederacy operated from Prophet's Town and remained in the general vicinity of the village. Normally, Indian lines of operation were not supported by well-established LOCs. Campaigning Indian forces were largely self-sustaining through foraging.[47]

There were several decisive points for each side during the campaign. Harrison obviously considered Tecumseh's leadership and experience a decisive point. In Harrison's mind, the best way to neutralize Tecumseh's leadership was to attack the center of the confederacy in Tecumseh's absence. The result of a successful attack would "destroy the fabrick" of the confederacy because the tribes would see the futility of war with the United States and withdraw their support. The obvious risk involved was that Tecumseh would be able to rebuild the coalition faster than Harrison expected. Another decisive point for Harrison was to destroy Prophet's Town. Even though it might be simple for the Indians to move their headquarters to another location, successful destruction of the village would demonstrate the resolve and power of the United States, and thus, in turn, would further cause the confederacy to lose support.

The decisive points for the confederacy were the preparedness of the U.S. military force, the force's ability to sustain itself, and the army's battlefield leadership. In the past, Indian forces had the most success against poorly trained American expeditions that exercised poor field discipline. Another characteristic of the earlier expeditions was their poor logistical sustainability. The Harmar and St. Clair expeditions did not maintain enough supplies on hand to conduct a campaign, and they did not adequately protect their LOCs. Battlefield leadership was also a decisive point for the Indians because poor American commanders in the past had not employed sound tactical principles during movement or while in static positions.

The force under Harrison was a mix of militia and regulars with little campaign experience. Harrison, however, seemed to have mastered many important lessons from General Wayne's successful conduct of the Fallen Timbers campaign. Harrison ensured that his LOCs were well established and guarded, and he paid close attention to the tactical aspects of employing his force. He also used deception to prevent compromise of the route, and

he planned a route that gave him several terrain advantages in employing his force.[48]

Harrison's force would have culminated if it had lost its ability to attack and destroy Prophet's Town. The Indians, to succeed, needed to degrade Harrison's force enough so that the army could not attack and destroy the village, thus allowing Tecumseh to claim that the confederacy maintained its integrity. The culminating point for the confederacy was a battlefield defeat. A battlefield defeat would demonstrate the ability of the United States to occupy and control Indian territory by force. The following table (see table 2) highlights the key aspects of operational design.

	UNITED STATES	INDIAN CONFEDERACY
CENTER OF GRAVITY	• Presidential policy.	• Political unity. • Tribes' continued support.
LINES OF OPERATION	• Exterior. • Supported by land and water LOCs.	• Interior. • Highly mobile forces that were foraging in nature.
DECISIVE POINTS	• Tactical employment. • Field discipline. • Logistical discipline. • Leadership.	• Tecumseh's leadership. • Prophet's Town.
CULMINATING POINTS	• Loss of ability to attack and destroy Prophet's Town.	• Inability to protect Prophet's Town. • Inability to attack and defeat the army.

Table 2. Campaign analysis, operational design

Tactically, the Americans and Indians were generally evenly matched on the frontier, and in that respect the Indians of the old Northwest limited opportunities for U.S. expansion. From the end of the Revolutionary War until the Battle of Tippecanoe, several Indian armies organized and executed independent military operations that prevented the United States from achieving operational and strategic goals. The Indians, however, were not able to stop the American expansion in the territory in the long term. The last chance for the Indians to succeed in the Old Northwest was to conduct operations in conjunction with the British during the War of 1812. These combined Indian-British efforts also met with defeat because the United States' ability continually to muster and sustain large military forces in the field finally overwhelmed the northwestern Indians and their ally.

NOTES

1. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 550. Tecumseh made this remark to Governor Harrison during one of their first meetings at Vincennes, Indiana Territory. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the land cessions under the 1809 treaty.

2. Indian term for the United States.

3. John Sugden, *Tecumseh's Last Stand* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 59.

4. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 533-34. This was the general theme of Tecumseh's speeches to the tribes he visited. The grand plan was also carved on wooden slabs and distributed to tribes with specific instructions. The inscriptions on the slabs had a dual meaning. One translation was benign and provided to curious whites; the other interpretation described the grand plan and was solely for Indian use. The slabs are referenced in many of the research materials. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 532, provides details about the slabs and includes a diagram of one.

5. Eckert, *Gateway*, 342. Previous Indian confederacies were generally short term and formed to meet an immediate threat. The confederacies organized to fight the different expeditions led by Generals Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne are examples of these types of short-term alliances. Tecumseh's ideas centered around establishing a long-term confederacy or amalgamation of tribes that would deal with the United States on a political as well as military level.

6. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 535-38.

7. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 535; and Pirtle, 10-11. The British had military posts and trading posts in Canada, around the Great Lakes area, that serviced Indian tribes in Indiana, Illinois, etc. British traders also traveled throughout the area and could often act as agents for the British government. During various times, the British offered bounties for white scalps or prisoners that the Indians captured. These practices continued as late as the War of 1812. See Eckert, *Gateway*, for details on some of the British bounty practices. See Matloff, 124-26, for more detail about Indian manpower contributions to the British during the War of 1812.

8. Retaining the ability to treat with individual chiefs was advantageous to Americans. It was not uncommon for Americans to ply Indians with alcohol and gifts or to find minor village chiefs (who did not have any real authority to sell land on behalf of their tribe) and gain land cessions from them. There were also instances when the treaties were ethical and conducted with the appropriate chief. In any case, it was not to Harrison's advantage to deal with one centrally unified body of Indians who were opposed to further land cessions.

9. Carter, 16, 119; and Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 758. Secretary of War William Eustis informed Harrison in a 5 May 1810 letter that several treaties from the fall of 1809 had been ratified. This would include the Treaty of Fort Wayne, which was signed 30 September 1809 and proclaimed 16 January 1810. Before the treaty of Fort Wayne was valid, a supplemental treaty with the Wea Indians was required. This treaty was signed on 26 October 1809 and ratified 25 January 1810. See Kappler, 101-4, for copies of the treaty and the supplement. A Congressional Act for the sale of lands gained through the Treaty of Fort Wayne passed on 30 April 1810. The Proclamation of Public Land Sales for the area was issued 3 May 1811. The proclamation specified what lands were for sale, the office in charge of the sale, and the date of the sale.

10. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 535-36.

11. Esarey, *History*, 98; and Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 498-501. This is not the same post that is currently in Kentucky. Fort Knox, Indiana Territory, was established at Vincennes in 1787.

12. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 542-43. The full text of the letter is contained in the reference cited.

13. Ibid., 605.

14. Ibid., 605; Esarey, *History*, 185.

15. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 605.

16. Downey, 85; Drake, 122; and Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 609-10. At the conclusion of Harrison's comments, there was an outburst from Tecumseh and the Indian delegation, and they brandished tomahawks; in response, the American infantry guard was called to the area. Harrison even drew his sword before calm prevailed.

17. Cleaves, 64; Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 535-36; and Pirtle, 7. The occupants of Prophet's Town had been without the salt annuity because the Prophet refused to accept it. Tecumseh was away from Prophet's Town when his brother refused the salt the previous year, as well as the next year when he confiscated all of it. A copy of Harrison's letter describing the incident can be found in Draper MSS. 1X15.

18. Carter, 20, 130, 131; Draper MSS. 1X15; Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 551-52; Esarey, *History*, 98; and Adam Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment U.S. Infantry in the Indiana and Michigan Territories* (Keene, New Hampshire: Sentinel Press, 1816), 8-11. A company from the 7th U.S. was in Vincennes by the time Colonel Boyd and the 4th U.S. (plus one company from the Rifle Regiment) arrived. The 4th U.S. was from the east coast and was ordered to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, then Newport, Kentucky, and finally to Vincennes, Indiana Territory. Upon their arrival at Vincennes, the units were posted to Fort Knox.

19. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 555-57; Edmunds, "Thin Red Line," 3; and Esarey, *History*, 185-86. See Kappler, 39-45, for a copy of the Treaty of Greenville. Many sources (including Harrison's correspondence) note that justice was not always reciprocal. The Treaty of Greenville authorized the Indians to drive settlers off of Indian lands (or punish them in any manner they saw fit). The treaty also specified measures to redress, i.e., "injuries done by individuals on either side." The injuries were rarely equitably dealt with, for example, the Indians had turned over offenders for trial, which resulted in convictions followed by hangings for the Indians. Harrison forced some whites to stand trial for murders of Indians; however, a white was never punished for murdering an Indian. This is probably one of the reasons that Tecumseh refused to acknowledge the incident as a murder or turn the Indians over to Harrison. Harrison recognized the injustice of this and, in some of his letters, seems sympathetic to the Indian plight regarding contact with white civilization, particularly in the area of American justice and corruption by alcohol. A few of the places that contain copies of Harrison's letters (describing injustices to Indians) are the Draper MSS. and Carter, *The Territory of Indiana 1810-1816*.

20. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 557.

21. Downey, 86-87; Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 763; Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 558; Edmunds, *Quest*, 219; and Hook, 30. Tecumseh is known to have

traveled as far south as Georgia and Alabama, and he may have traveled to the Carolinas, Florida, Mississippi, and Arkansas during his 1811 trip. Tecumseh hoped to return before spring and left instructions that his brother should appease the whites, if necessary, in order to make sure that the confederation did not fall apart. Tecumseh felt that he could build a confederacy strong enough to demand return of formerly held Indian lands or fight to regain them if required. He thought that the confederacy would be strong enough to act on the grand plan once he returned from the south. Therefore, he ordered his brother not to take any premature action and to have the village disperse if attacked. He felt that Prophet's Town could be rebuilt if destroyed by Harrison, but the coalition of tribes could not be reorganized if they were defeated on the battlefield.

22. Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 762-63.

23. Ibid., 763.

24. Glenn Tucker, *Tecumseh: Vision of Glory* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956), 219.

25. Ibid., 219.

26. Adams, 355.

27. Carter, 133-34.

28. Pirtle, 16-17.

29. James Green, *William Henry Harrison: His Life and Times* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1941), 119-20; and Lexington newspaper as quoted in Tucker, 218.

30. Gilbert, 270; and Pirtle, 37.

31. This figure includes 350 regulars, but it does not include the two companies of militia that remained behind to guard the settlements.

32. The concept of invading Indian territory without the consent of Congress is from Tucker, 219. For additional information on entering Indian territory one can review several documents. The Northwest Ordinance specified that the Indians could not be invaded or disturbed except in "lawful wars authorized by Congress." The U.S. Constitution also gives Congress the authority to declare

war. One can look at specific treaties to determine the legality of settlers, military, traders, etc., to enter Indian territory. Sometimes, the treaties specified the right of Indians to enter or use ceded land. For example, some treaties allowed the Indians to use U.S. "public lands" for hunting and fishing. The Treaty of Greenville even gave the Indians the right to expel unwanted settlers from their lands. Present-day Indian tribes still retain hunting and fishing rights under certain treaties. The Chippewa recently had their hunting and fishing rights affirmed in a 1983 court decision. See Duane Champagne, ed., *Native America: Portrait of the Peoples* (Detroit MI: Visible Ink Press, 1994), 55-91, for examples of current Indian claims in the American northeast.

33. Draper MSS. 1X14; and Drake, 132-33. Harrison wrote to Eustis on 6 June 1811 and told him that Indian actions were "by no means indicative of a pacific disposition." Harrison received several reports that led him to believe that the Prophet and Tecumseh were hostile. A Kickapoo chief visited Vincennes and warned Harrison that Tecumseh and his brother harbored hostile designs, regardless of what peaceful overtures they made. The governor of Missouri, General William Clarke, told Harrison that the Mississippi Indian tribes received war wampum belts from Tecumseh, inviting them to go to war against the Americans. Clarke further warned that the war would start with an attack on Vincennes and that the Sacs Indians had agreed to join the confederacy and had already sent a delegation to Fort Malden for arms and ammunition. Reports from the Chicago area indicated that the tribes in that area had already decided to go to war with the United States. A party surveying the 1809 land cessions was interrupted by a band of Wea Indians, who disarmed the survey party, tied them up, and detained them overnight. The Indians released the surveyors the next day and told them that they thought that they were deserters from the local garrison. The surveyors interpreted the Indian action as a manifestation of hostile intent and declined to complete the survey. Harrison, however, was not sure whether or not to consider the act as hostile.

34. This incident is summarized from several sources. The summary of the theft is from Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 555. The use of the theft as a pretense for a show of force is from ibid., 765, and Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 560-61. The Indians actually stole the horses twice. One party of Indians successfully conducted a horse-stealing raid, but the settlers went to Prophet's Town and reclaimed their horses. After the settlers left, the Prophet set the braves out to resteal the horses. The Indians surprised the settlers but did not kill them; they

simply walked into the camp, held the settlers under guard, and took all of the horses. Harrison also included descriptions of Indian horse-stealing raids in various pieces of correspondence. Some of these letters are in the Draper MSS.

35. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 561-63; Pirtle, 29-30; and Florence G. Watts, ed., "Lt. Charles Larrabee's account of the Battle of Tippecanoe," *Indiana Magazine of History* (1961): 233. The chiefs who were detained at Prophet's Town eventually provided Harrison with valuable intelligence regarding the Prophet's strength. The chiefs reported that Harrison's show of force caused the Wea and Miami Indians, as well as a group of Potawatomi Indians, to abandon the Prophet. The loss of support from Wea, Miami, and Potawatomi groups caused the Prophet's strength to dwindle to about 450 warriors. Harrison was concerned that the Prophet might receive other reinforcements because there were several sympathetic and large villages of Potawatomi Indians to the rear of Prophet's Town.

36. Adams, 362; and Pirtle, 27, 30-32. Harrison requested four companies of volunteers (two from Kentucky and two from Indiana). Two companies eventually arrived and participated in the campaign. The territorial laws of the time allowed colonels to turn out their commands in an emergency without the permission of the governor. Harrison applied directly to General Wells of Jefferson County, Kentucky, for volunteers and informed the governor of Kentucky at a later date. Harrison told the governor that he felt that it would be faster to approach Wells directly, and he felt confident that the governor would approve of the action since Kentucky was initially prepared to provide a larger complement of troops for the campaign. Harrison, as governor, had the authority to commission officers in the Indiana militia and did so once the volunteers arrived. That is the reason that General Wells and a few others are referred to by multiple titles in the source material. Wells is sometimes called general (Kentucky militia) or major (Indiana militia).

37. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 562; and Pirtle, 27, 29. American expeditions often relied on contractors to conduct their resupply operations. The contractors that supported Harrison arrived later than expected and forced Harrison to delay his departure from Fort Harrison. St. Clair's expedition demonstrated to Harrison the folly of conducting operations without proper logistics support. Harrison was an ensign in the 1st U.S. shortly after St. Clair's defeat and was aware that

many of St. Clair's difficulties with supplies contributed to his defeat. See Green, 26-29, for a description of Harrison's arrival at the 1st U.S. and Fort Washington. Gilbert and Eckert provide excellent descriptions of St. Clair's expedition and the troubles he had with supplies and desertion. Gilbert, 53-155, also provides a description of Harrison's arrival at the 1st U.S. and Fort Washington.

38. Tucker, 221.

39. Adams, 362-63; Drake, 148; Draper 1X1; Eckert, *The Frontiersmen*, 563; Esarey, *History*, 187; Pirtle, 31-32, 37; and Wesley J. Whickar, ed., "Shabonee's account of Tippecanoe," *Indiana Magazine of History* 17 (1921): 355. Harrison never saw the delegation again, although there are indicators that it reached Prophet's Town. There are several possibilities: the Prophet might have had the delegation killed, the delegation might have been released and traveled down the wrong side of the Wabash trying to reach Harrison, or the delegation might have abandoned the campaign. The Prophet apparently sent some type of delegation to the army after receiving Harrison's message. It is not clear who made up the delegation and its exact purpose. Shabonee indicates that the delegation was supposed to buy time for the Prophet while he prepared the Indians at Prophet's Town for battle.

40. Adams, 364; *The Frontiersmen*, 563; Edmunds, *Quest*, 155; Pirtle, 37; Tucker, 222; and Whickar, 355. Indian scouts watched Harrison's army during their movement from Vincennes. Apparently, the Indians stopped watching the army or lost contact with it after it left Fort Harrison because the delegation that was supposed to meet Harrison was reported to have traveled down the wrong bank of the Wabash. Shabonee highlights this and remarks: "We expected that the white warriors would come up on the south [the Wabash turns to the northeast above the Vermillion River] bank of the river, and then we could parley with them, but they crossed far down the river and came on this side, right up to the great Indian town."

41. Adams, 364; and Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 756. The blockhouse was named Boyd's Blockhouse in honor of Colonel Boyd (4th U.S.). Establishment of the blockhouse also provided a place for resupply boats to drop off needed supplies for Harrison's element. The Wabash was an important transportation route for Indians and whites in the area. Harrison was careful about securing his line of communication, a lesson probably learned from St. Clair's

failed expedition and Wayne's success at Fallen Timbers. Wayne spent the winter prior to his campaign building and manning forts along his expected LOC. Wayne also built a fort two days before the Fallen Timbers battle (Fort Deposit). The fort was used to cache all of the excess baggage and equipment not needed for combat. Wayne also knew that the Indians fasted before a battle; consequently, the delay caused by building the fort was to his advantage and the Indians detriment. The Indian force was physically weakened by one or two days of fasting, and some of the Indians departed before the battle in search of food. Fort Deposit was built on 17 August 1794, and the battle was fought on 20 August 1794. Eckert, *Gateway*, Gifford, and Gilbert provide details on the Indian tradition of fasting before battle and the impact of fasting at Fallen Timbers.

42. Beard, 75; Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart*, 558; Eckert, *Gateway*, 385; Edmunds, *Quest*, 159-17; and Pirtle, xvi-xviii, 77. An example of the effect of Tippecanoe on recruiting tribes for the confederacy is found in Draper MSS. 4YY73. During his visit to the Creek Indians, Tecumseh proposed that the Indians in the north should drive the whites south of the Ohio River, while the southern Indian tribes should drive the whites north of the Cumberland River. The Creeks sent a delegation to Tippecanoe with Tecumseh to make an assessment on the viability of the plan. The delegation arrived at Tippecanoe shortly after the battle; it returned to its tribe, convinced that Tecumseh's plan would not work.

43. These engagements are highlighted because the Indian battle plan was based on taking advantage of the Indians' natural mobility by conducting a series of ambushes or engagements in close terrain. The St. Clair engagement is different because the Indian tactical plan was changed at the last minute to take advantage of the fact that the Americans were so unprepared. The Indians attacked St. Clair's poorly defended encampment at first light and successfully routed the Americans. Although he did not participate in the Harmar fight, Tecumseh was probably familiar with the tactics used during the engagement.

44. Eckert, *Gateway*, 185-87, 220-23; Edmunds, *Quest*, 33-34, 39-43; and Edmunds, "Thin Red Line," 5. Tecumseh was a scout and spy for the Indian confederacy at St. Clair's defeat, and he led an Indian war party against the American army at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

45. Downey, 55; Drake, 79; Esarey, *History*, 122; Gunderson, "William Henry Harrison," 17; and Urwin, 30. British soldiers from the Detroit garrison attacked St. Clair's expedition as part of the forces commanded by Little Turtle and Blue Jacket. On 30 June 1794, Canadian militia, dressed as Indians, participated in an Indian attack of an American supply column departing Fort Recovery (Ohio) during Wayne's Fallen Timbers campaign.

46. Definitions for the elements of operational design are from *Operations*, 6-7 to 6-9.

47. Gilbert, 174-75, notes that it took between 200 and 400 deer and a like number of turkeys per day to sustain an Indian force of about 1,200 warriors during the Fallen Timbers campaign. The British, through military posts or traders, often supported Indian forces in the field with weapons and ammunition and some foodstuffs. The Indians also supplemented wild game with corn and other foodstuffs that they grew or procured locally. In general, however, the Indians had greater mobility because of the foraging nature of their sustainment program. The drawback to this type of logistical plan is that large Indian forces could not campaign in an area for extended periods of time because they quickly depleted the resources they needed to conduct sustained operations.

48. Harrison had served as a Regular Army ensign, lieutenant, and captain (1st U.S. and the American Legion). Harrison was one of General Wayne's aides during the Fallen Timbers campaign and commanded a frontier outpost after the campaign.